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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EU](#) [GR](#)  
SUBJECT: GREEK VIEWS ON MAY GAERC

REF: A. ATHENS 698

[1](#)B. ATHENS 651

Classified By: A/POLCOUNS JEFFREY HOVENIER. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) DepPolCouns discussed likely issues for the May 26-27 EU Foreign Ministers' meeting (GAERC) with MFA European Correspondent Antonia Katsourou. Key points of the discussion are summarized below by issue topic:

-- WESTERN BALKANS: Katsourou believed GAERC discussion would focus in general terms on the outcome of the Serbian elections. Agreed conclusions stressed support for Serbia's European perspective. On Kosovo, Katsourou said the question of what would happen after June 15 when the ICO assumed supervisory authority was "problematic." A residual presence of UNMIK was inevitable, but much depended on the new Serbian government. A related issue was how to accommodate those EU member-states that had not recognized Kosovo's independence and were not part of the ICO (seven or eight countries, including Greece). On the SAA with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Katsourou said Greece supported the agreement and wanted it signed but recognized that technical problems remained. She expected signature in June.

-- IRAQ: Katsourou had little substantive to say on Iraq and deferred to her colleagues in the A6 Middle East Directorate. The latter had told us earlier that Greece was considering opening a consulate in northern Iraq (it already has an embassy) to support expanding Greek construction interests. FM Bakoyannis was concerned, however, about Turkish reaction because opening a consulate might be perceived as tacit support of Kurdish autonomy.

-- LEBANON: Katsourou expected a discussion of Lebanon at the GAERC, particularly in light of the late-breaking announcement of the agreement between the Lebanese government and opposition in Doha. Katsourou said the GOG believed incorporation of Hizballah into the political structure could be a positive step. "If they give up violence," she noted, "we will support them." (NOTE: On Greece's views on working with Hizballah, see ref A. END NOTE.)

-- ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE: Katsourou noted the Egyptian proposal on Palestinian unity, though mentioned it was progressing slowly. She said the EU supported all such initiatives. Greece was particularly concerned about stopping Israeli settlement construction.

-- AFGHANISTAN: Discussion at the GAERC was expected to focus on the upcoming donors' conference, to which Greece intended to send a yet-unnamed high-level representative. Greece believed this was important and intended to donate.

-- SOMALIA: Greece had signed a letter with Spain and others on combating piracy and would support a UN resolution on the issue.

-- GEORGIA: Katsourou expected GAERC discussion to focus on election results. Greece itself was torn between "two friends," though she also said Greece supported the EU consensus on the Instant Assessment Mechanism to investigate the shooting-down of the Georgian UAV. She noted that a year ago, Greece and Sweden had introduced the Mechanism initiative (not only for Georgia), which was subsequently discussed and adopted by the EU.

-- IRAN: Katsourou noted the discussion at the EU on sanctions the previous day and said they were awaiting Iran's promised proposals, which not yet appeared. On future wished to see how the 3 measures went before Iran was not yet on the GAERC agenda. She confirmed information provided earlier by the A6 Directorate that Greece's position

on Iran sanctions was heavily influenced by the interests of Greek shipowners (ref B). She added further that Greek shipping interests also played a role in Greece's position on Burma and other issues. Given the importance of the shipowners to the Greek economy, "we're always sensitive" to their interests.

SPECKHARD